Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-18. (canceled)

19. (previously presented) A storage server for providing a virtualized storage apparatus to a plurality of hosts, the storage server comprising:

a first communication interface coupled to a first network switch to receive a data access request from one or more hosts that are couple to the first switch;

a second communication interface coupled to a second network switch to communicate with first and second storage subsystems including first and second storage areas, respectively, to store data associated with the hosts; and

a virtual device driver component that is operable to present a virtual storage area to the hosts, the virtual storage area being mapped to the first and second storage areas of the first and second storage subsystems,

wherein the storage server is configured to receive a first data request including a virtual address identifying a first location in the virtual storage area from one of the hosts and generate a second data request directed to the first storage subsystem, the second data request including a storage address identifying a second location in the first storage area that is mapped to the first location in the virtual storage area,

wherein the storage server is configured to change mapping of the first location in the virtual storage area to a third location in the second storage area in connection with a data migration operation.

20. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 19, wherein the data migration involves migration of data stored in the second location to the third location.

21. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 20 wherein if the storage server receives a third data request including the virtual address identifying the first location of the virtual storage area from one of the hosts after the data migration, the storage server is configured to generate a fourth data request directed to the second storage subsystem, the fourth data request including a storage address identifying the third location in the second storage area.

22. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 19, wherein the first and second network switches are the same.

23. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 19, wherein the server is configured to initiate the data migration of first data stored in the first storage area of the first storage subsystem to the second storage area of the second storage subsystem.

24. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 23, wherein the server is configured to receive a request from one of the hosts to access a portion of the first data while the first data are being migrated to the second storage area.

25. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 24, wherein the server accesses a data migration unit to determine whether to direct a server request generated in response to the request from one of the hosts to access the first data is to be directed to the first or second storage subsystem, wherein the data migration unit maintains a record on portions of the first data that remain in the first storage area as the first data are being migrated to the second storage area.

26. (previously presented) The storage server of claim 25, wherein the data migration unit is provided in one of the storage subsystems or the server.

27. (previously presented) A storage system coupled to a network switch, comprising:

a backend storage server coupled to a plurality of hosts via a network;

a first storage subsystem including a first storage controller and a plurality of first storage devices, the first storage controller configured to control access to the first storage devices, the first storage devices defining a first storage area, the first storage subsystem being coupled to the backend storage server via the network; and

a second storage subsystem including a second storage controller and a plurality of second storage devices, the second controller being configured to control access to the second storage devices, the second storage devices defining a second storage area, the second storage subsystem being coupled to the backend storage server via the network,

wherein the backend storage server presents a virtualized storage area to the hosts using at least the first storage area of the first storage subsystem,

wherein the backend storage server is configured to receive a first data request including a virtual address identifying a first location in the virtualized storage area from one of the hosts and generate a second data request directed to the first storage subsystem, the second data request including a storage address identifying a second location in the first storage area that is mapped to the first location in the virtualized storage area,

wherein the backend storage server is configured to change mapping of the first location in the virtualized storage area from the second location in the first storage area to a third location in the second storage area in connection with a data migration operation.

28. (previously presented) A method for operating a storage system with a virtualized storage area, the method comprising:

receiving a first data request a first host at a backend server, the backend server being coupled to a plurality of hosts and first and second storage subsystems via a network, the backend server presenting a virtualized storage area to the plurality of the hosts, the first data request including a virtual address identifying a first location in the virtualized storage area;

generating a second data request at the backend server, the second data request including a storage address identifying a second location in a first storage area that is mapped to the first location in the virtualized storage area, the first storage area being defined by the first storage subsystem;

transmitting the second data request to the first storage subsystem to satisfy the first data request received from the first host; and

changing mapping of the first location in the virtualized storage area from the second location in the first storage area to a third location in a second storage area in connection with a data migration operation, the second storage area being defined by the second storage subsystem, the data migration operation involving migrating data stored in the first storage area to the second storage area.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

maintaining a table holding a flag for indicating a data migration state on each data block associated with the virtualized storage area.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein each data block corresponds to a logical block address.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the table is maintained by one o the first and second storage subsystems.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

receiving a third data request at the backend server including the virtual address identifying the first location of the virtual storage area from a second host after the data migration; and

generating a fourth data request directed to the second storage subsystem, the fourth data request including a storage address identifying the third location in the second storage area.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the first and second hosts are different hosts.